

MEDIA RELEASE



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FOR RELEASE: **Tuesday, October 28, 2003**

Kernan Announces Recipients of Governor's Award for Excellence in Community Service and Volunteerism

Nine Hoosiers and one organization were honored with the Governor's Award for Excellence in Community Service and Volunteerism at a celebration luncheon on Thursday, October 23. The Indiana Commission on Community Service and Volunteerism (ICCSV) sponsored the ceremony, which took place in the Grand Hall of Union Station in Indianapolis.

"This award is the least we can do to honor the spirit and passion of those who give unselfishly of their time and energy to the communities in which they are rooted," said Kernan. "The Governor's award is a very small token of appreciation on behalf of Hoosiers everywhere."

Honored for their service and volunteer efforts were:

- **Patricia Popa (Highland).** In response to a downtown economic slump in her community, Patricia Popa spearheaded an effort to revitalize interest in Highland's downtown through the creation of an outdoor art exhibit known locally as the "Downtown Ducks." Thanks to Ms. Popa's project, individuals are flocking to the downtown area to see the brightly painted four-foot tall fiberglass ducks. The result: residents and visitors shop and eat at local stores and restaurants, giving the area's businesses a much needed boost and attracting new merchants to the downtown area.
- **Alice McCray (Indianapolis).** A well-respected roll-up your sleeves grassroots organizer, Alice McCray is often asked by local residents on Indianapolis' Far Eastside why she does all that she does. Her reply is simply: "Why not?" Over the past ten years, Ms. McCray has initiated many positive changes in her neighborhood. Her efforts include the coordination of semi-annual neighborhood cleanups and the establishment of a Crime Watch program in her neighborhood.
- **Darrell Kindschy (Fort Wayne).** As his neighbors will tell you, Darrell Kindschy works both night and day as a champion of grassroots efforts to improve neighborhoods in Fort Wayne. His goal: to build the type of community that every person can feel proud to call home. As the president of the Creighton-Home Neighborhood Association, Mr. Kindschy has worked tirelessly for many years to promote a strong sense of community in his neighborhood and throughout the Southwest quadrant of Fort Wayne.

- **Bob Haverstick (Indianapolis).** “Never Too Late” is both a philosophy and the name of a program that grants the wishes of Hoosier seniors. As the founder and a volunteer, Bob Haverstick and his corps of volunteers literally make the dreams of older adults come true. Whether he is arranging a downtown carriage ride for a group of ladies or securing a personal visit from a professional race car driver for a nursing home resident, Mr. Haverstick’s mission is to let the twinkle in the eyes of seniors out again, so they can feel like kids.
- **White River Watchers (Anderson).** In 1998, the White River Watchers, a group of individuals interested in protecting the White River watershed, came together for the purpose of community action and public education. Since that time, the group has recruited hundreds of volunteers of all ages for the common purpose of beautifying the river. Today, the group has over 35 dues paying members and a mailing list that reaches more than 150 Hoosiers statewide.
- **Trina Spillman (New Harmony).** Three years ago, Trina Spillman quit her job as an advertising copywriter and started “The Need to Feed,” a non-profit organization aimed at feeding low-income neighbors in her community. Initially, the program supplied local food pantries with foods grown by Ms. Spillman, her family and friends. In addition to running a non-profit organization, she set her entrepreneurial skills into motion and opened a small business where she sells homemade food items, crafts, and artwork on consignment. The proceeds from the business support “The Need to Feed” program, which provides both food and other services to low-income Hoosiers, especially homeless children.
- **Heather Dicks (South Bend).** A former two-term AmeriCorps Member, Heather Dicks has volunteered with Indiana Legal Services (ILS) in South Bend for the past five years, where she began her service as an intake worker. To date, she has volunteered more than 1,978 hours alone to the ILS. In her spare time, Ms. Dicks is pursuing a graduate degree at IU South Bend and continues in other volunteer capacities such as providing outreach to a local day center for women and serving lunch at South Bend’s Hope Rescue Mission.
- **Virginia Andrews (Vincennes).** Each day at 4:30 a.m., Virginia Andrews begins writing letters to military families as part the Knox County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program’s (R.S.V.P.) “Operation Caring.” By 7:30 a.m., Ms. Andrews is on her way to the RSVP office where she works as a receptionist 20 hours a week. When she takes leave of her responsibilities at 11:00 a.m., Ms. Andrews doesn’t head home for lunch and a nap. Instead, she spends the afternoon transporting other seniors to doctor’s appointments and other errands. In addition, she volunteers weekly at her church, and monthly with a local food program. With these and other activities, she has logged an average of 600 volunteer hours per year each year since 1991. At 79 years young, Ms. Andrews shows no signs of stopping and only slows occasionally to grab her pole and tackle box for an afternoon of fishing.
- **Juana Watson (Columbus).** For the past 25 years, Juana Watson, a native of Calnali, Mexico, has served new immigrants to Indiana in a variety of ways. Ms. Watson has dedicated her life to assisting Latino immigrants adjust and thrive in America. She strives to enhance awareness of and bridge the gap between peoples of different cultures. In response to challenges she faced during her first years in Indiana, Ms. Watson founded “Su Casa Columbus” in 1999, a non-profit organization that assists Latino residents of surrounding counties with education, recreation, civic information, and health care. Additionally, Ms. Watson makes regular trips to Mexico to provide medical care, build houses, mentor students, and most of all to offer hope to those who live there.
- **Kristy Anderson (Fort Wayne).** Every Thursday morning, Kristy Anderson arrives at the League for the Blind and Disabled in Fort Wayne, where she has volunteered as a receptionist for the past four years. By volunteering her time, Ms. Anderson not only provides invaluable office skills, but she also helps keep the League’s administrative costs low, making it possible for more funds to be spent on serving people with disabilities. Being legally blind does not stop her from performing these tasks in an extremely organized and efficient manner. She also serves on the board of the Workers for the Blind and is an avid bowler in the organization’s bowling league.

The Governor's Awards for Excellence in Community Service and Volunteerism are presented to those individuals, groups, and/or organizations that exhibit an outstanding commitment to volunteerism in their local communities. Individuals are nominated from one of the following categories: **Citizenship, Community Development, Education, the Environment, Health and Human Services, Public Safety, and Technology**. More than 25 nominations were submitted to the ICCSV.

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